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CHANGES IN ALBERTA RECREATION

A Brief

Presented to the

Alberta Provincial Cabinet Members

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by

Southern Alberta

Recreation Association

September 18, 1973

AIM

To outline our concern on the following:

1. Grants
   a. Per Capita
   b. Capital Funding
2. Further Education
3. Permanent Recreation Internship Program
4. Alberta Summer Games
5. Communications
6. Co-operative Camping

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Introduction

We wish to commend the Cabinet of the Government of Alberta for making themselves available to hear presentations in Southern Alberta. This allows organizations such as ours the opportunity to acquaint the cabinet with our concerns on matters of recreation.

Our association is called the Southern Alberta Recreation Association and is made up of persons over the age of 16 who are interested in furthering the aims of recreation for Southern Alberta. The general membership comes from elected city, town councillors and school board members, appointed recreation board members and professional recreation personnel working in the field of recreation along with persons having interest in the future of the people in the province of Alberta.

The objects of our society are to maximize participation in the wholesome leisure activities of recreation. This is done through development of program, facilities and leadership development courses for the public at large in Southern Alberta. To fulfill this end we have been meeting for the last ten years and have worked on a number of joint projects such as camping and the Southern Alberta Summer Games. Our organization has taken the leading role in bringing together all associations in Southern Alberta such as school authorities, recreation authorities, private recreation groups, preventive social service groups with the aim being to set up leadership development and cooperative programming for the residents of Southern Alberta.

If changes are to take place, and problems solved, plans must be made. A meeting like this between Government and the Recreation Public is the first step in working towards solutions but we must emphasize that meetings like this serve no purpose unless further studies and actions take place after this meeting. The second step in solving any problem is to outline the problems which exist and to make some recommendations as to how to solve these problems. In this brief, we will outline the problems as we see them along with our recommendations for solutions to them.

Our brief is aimed directly at Provincial Recreation Grants, Education Grants, the Recreation Internship Program, the Southern Alberta Summer Games, as well as communications and cooperative camping. We ask that the Government of Alberta sincerely consider the need for the following changes in recreation.

Grants

Of all the various groups that work with the general public, recreation is the only one that, through its make-up, structure and training works with all ages, sexes, religions, and races. The other Departments such as Welfare, Preventive Social Service and Education, through their structure and legislation and the training of their staff, are committed to work either with specific age groups or specific economic groups or are tied down to work in specific problem areas in our society. This leaves the field of recreation, and rightly so, the responsibility of the program for the total populous. The government has not set its priorities in our area, yet we find that all other government grants have increased extensively while in recreation, operating grants have remained the same for ten years.

a. Per Capita

Another problem which occurs is that the grants are tied to per capita. This leads to another inequity in the rural areas ~~in that~~ the population is decreasing while the city populations are increasing. In other words, the cities having broader tax bases towards recreation, receive more grant money, while the rural areas receive less money.

There appears to be some inconsistency in Government assistance and service when it comes to grass roots and county social programs. (An example of a typical county's social and other program services provided by or encouraged by Provincial and Municipal Government).

Job Title	People Serviced	Local Gov't funding and control	Per Cent Funded by Province	Responsible Authority
me Economist	Primarily farm housewives	0	100%	Provincial Government
ntinuing Education	People desiring advanced instruction	0	100% to a max.	Provincial Gov't approved via local coordinating body
eventive Social Services	Lower economic groups, problem groups and expanding	20% funding	80%	Local through appointment
uth Worker	4-H groups, youth groups, recreation organizations, boards & directors, etc.	0	100%	Provincial Gov't
creation Director	All ages, sex, economic groups & individuals regardless	100% less $1.00 per capita	$1.00 per capita maximum for all programs (probably less than 10%)	Local Gov't and appointed Boards

In some cases all of the above are vieing to provide the same service through direct programs to some of the same public. All are funding to

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some extent by the Provincial Government and we feel there is duplication and confusion to the people who are using the services as well as those administering the program. It would almost appear that the Provincial Government is encouraging overlap of services, and further the amount of financing is provided in direct proportion to the amount of control the Government has over the service; we maintain this does not encourage local responsibility or participation and brings about local apathy.

We feel this is an oversight, and therefore, would recommend that the Government encourage local authority to be responsible for their own leisure and educational direct programs, and further, that consistency in funding be maintained regardless of which Government department is sponsoring or assisting in the program.

b. Capital Funding

We would like to point out that because of the Government's delay in announcing the capital grants structure, many committees are not proceeding with needed projects.

Further Education Grants

The Continuing Education grants, recently announced by the Government, are an infringement on the Recreation profession. Many Recreation Directors find it difficult to ask for and train volunteers when they can receive $4.00 - $8.00 an hour for instruction in classes approved by a Further Education Council. The Director is becoming a coordinator of provincial programs and is getting away from a recreational concept of promoting volunteers.

Permanent Recreation Internship Program

The opportunity this summer of an internship program for recreation students, as part of the S.T.E.P. Summer Project, has once again demonstrated the need for and desirability of such a program on a continuing basis.

In our view, the recreation practitioner must be well educated and have considerable practical experience before he can do an acceptable job in a community. This province produces one of the largest number of recreation graduates in Canada, with over 400 students involved at the University of Alberta, however, many employers are hesitant to hire these graduates due to their lack of on-the-job experience.

In order to provide a broad range of educational on-the-job experiences, communities require the type of assistance which was provided through this year's S.T.E.P. project. It is our view, however, that such a program is too important to be considered only when the unemployment situation dictates the need for "make work" projects.

Summer Games Brief to Cabinet

This brief is primarily of an educational nature designed to bring the Honorable members up-to-date on some exciting events which started in our area and which are now spreading throughout the province and the rest of Canada.

We have attempted, through the Southern Alberta Summer Games, to encourage a broad based participation in a wide range of sports which are not normally well organized by other bodies. This program was initiated as phase I of a total sport, fitness and cultural program in this area.

We have attempted to operate this program, and others, with limited financial assistance from outside sources. While we have received limited financial support from the Provincial Government, we have relied heavily on professional and consultative services offered through the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation.

The government has authorized "Sport Alberta" to develop Alberta games. We are concerned that our philosophy of "mass participation on a grass roots" level will be drowned by a philosophy of promoting only the best athletes in Alberta to compete. There are enough competitions designed for the best athletes (as recently determined in a Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation study) and too few events such as our Southern Alberta Summer Games which are designed for the masses to compete for fitness, fun and enjoyment. The control of regional games should be by local people. If additional funding was made available to organizations like ours, we could, as a supplement to our games, develop sports clinics, thus accomplishing some of the goals of Sport Alberta.

Communications

We are concerned about the hap-hazard approach to recreation which still occurs, all too often, in the small communities of Alberta. It appears that the Government has a policy of hiring more and more personnel in the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation but keeping these people in Edmonton. We feel that more recreation consultants should be placed in the field closer to the community where they can meet the legitimate needs of rural residents rather than being salted away in head offices in Edmonton, or alternatively is that more funds be made available to local communities or regions so we might be better able to meet their own needs.

Cooperative Camp Facilities

We have for some time felt a need in Southern Alberta for cooperative camping facilities. Our association is willing to prepare and submit a proposal to the Provincial Government for assistance in the development

of Cooperative Camping Facilities to serve this area. We would hope that such a proposal would be funded much the same as the YMCA camp out of Calgary, the 4-H camp adjacent to Cypress Hills Park, as well as others in Alberta.

Summary

In summing up we appreciate this opportunity given to us by you, our Provincial Cabinet to present our concerns, on the future of the leisure time activities for the people of the Province of Alberta. We are appreciative of the support we have received from our Government but feel that improvements must be continued if we are to meet the needs of pressure and change in our society.

We sincerely hope that you will consider our recommendations which are:

1. Grants

a. Per Capita

We ask the Government to reconsider the present grant formula based on the one dollar per capita and treat recreation with the same concern you have placed on Preventive Social Services and School Departments.

b. Capital Funding

Also we ask that the capital grant be announced immediately so that Recreation Departments can start the construction of new facilities as soon as possible. Our concern is that the costs are rising so rapidly that we feel that the sooner we can start projects the cheaper they can be done. If these projects are not started soon, we may well lose the benefit of the capital grant to inflation.

2. Further Education

We ask that our Government seriously study the infringement of further education grants and its department on the local Recreation

Boards. Again we point out that by paying instructors $4.00 to $8.00 an hour sets a trend that will have to be followed by Recreation Departments. We feel that the costs that will be occured would be detrimental to programming in that we'd have to reduce the number of programs offered.

3. Permanent Recreation Internship Program

We recommend to our Government that a permanent internship program should be established and in this way we will increase the skills and abilities of the leadership coming into the communities.

4. Summer Games

We ask our Government to reconsider at this time the appointment of Sports Alberta to develop Alberta Games. We feel that their policies in the past are not aimed towards mass participation and as there is a Recreation Department in most communities it would seem that it would be most feasible to have the Recreation Departments along with Sports Alberta to develop Alberta Games.

5. Communications

That our Government instigate studies on the policies of hiring Provincial employees and the placement of those employees. We further suggest that the studies should include how communication can be improved between the small rural areas and the home office of the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation.

6. Co-operative Camping

That our Government treats public recreation with the same consideration as they have given the Y.M.C.A. camp and the 4-H camp and that a policy be set up that regionalizes camping facilities.

We sincerely hope that action can be taken on some of our recommendations Our organization will be willing to co-operate in any way we can.

Thank you.

Southern Alberta Recreation Association

Press Conf. - 2:30

Cabinet -

8:30 at Premiers Office in Calgary